

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE



LIBRARY ASSISTANTS' ASSOCIATION.

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No. 5.

L.A.A. MEETINGS, LONDON, MANCHESTER	...	65
<hr/>		
LECTURES IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES	67
<hr/>		
THE ORIGIN OF THE ENGLISH NOVEL (<i>Conclusion</i>)		68
<hr/>		
THE L.A. EDUCATION COMMITTEE	71

*See page 65 for special announcement as to social gathering
on February 7th at Shoreditch.*

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"The Free Library: Its History and Present Condition." By J. J. OGLE. 1897.

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N.B.—See also "Greater London," by E. Walford, M.A., F.S.A. (page 360); "Methods of Social Reform," by Prof. W. Stanley Evans, M.A., F.R.S., LL.D.; "Public Libraries," by T. Greenwood, F.R.G.S.; &c., &c.

* As a matter of fact it will be found in about nine-tenths of the Libraries using indicators. Over 300 Institutions are now using it.

† Sixty-two Public Libraries in London and the Metropolitan area are using it.

MAGAZINE RACKS.

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C. T. DAVIS, Secretary and Librarian."

* The Cotgreave Racks are in use at some 50 Libraries and Literary Institutions, from which similar testimonials have been received.

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"DUBLIN REVIEW."

'The Editor of the 'DUBLIN REVIEW' (Canon Moyes), desires me to thank you for the specimen of the 'Contents-Subject Index,' and to say that he has formed a high opinion of it, in fact he has already found it useful.'

T. W. HUNTER, Librarian, Archbishop's House, Westminster.

Similar expressions of opinion have been received from a large number of leading journals, and from many well known English and American Librarians.

N.B.—The Contents-Subject Index will be supplied to all Library Assistants at a reduce price, if applied for before publication

Full particulars of the above and also of other Library Aids sent upon application.



THE LIBRARY ASSISTANTS' ASSOCIATION.

FOUNDED 1895. FIFTH SESSION. YEAR 1899-1900.

Members are requested to carefully read the announcements appearing on this page, as no further intimation of meetings and other arrangements will be sent out.

FEBRUARY MEETING.

The fifth meeting will be held at Cripplegate Institute, on Wednesday, 21st February, at 8 p.m., when Mr. C. R. Wright, of the Barrow Public Library, will read a paper on "The Library Assistant: his Work and Recreation."

MARCH MEETING.

The sixth meeting will be held at Leyton Public Library, when Mr. Z. Moon, the Librarian, will read a paper.

SOCIAL GATHERING.

By kind permission of the Library Committee of the Shoreditch Vestry, a social gathering of the members and friends of the L.A.A. will be held on Wednesday, 7th February, at 7.45 for 8 p.m., at the Shoreditch Public Library, Pitfield Street, N. During the evening several musical friends will assist, and while there will be some dancing, those who prefer other amusements will also be provided for. A separate smoking-room will be provided for gentlemen. A ticket (admitting two) is sent to all London members, and further tickets may be had upon application to Mr. W. B. Thorne, St. Bride's Institute, Bride Lane, E.C.

JANUARY MEETING.

There was a good muster of members at Southwark to hear Mr. Roebuck read his successful essay, and the fact that members had been able to read it in these columns before coming to the meeting, kept few or none away, while it added much to the piquancy of the discussion. Mr. H. D. Roberts, the L.A. lecturer on Library Organisation, fittingly occupied the chair, and welcomed the L.A.A. once again to Southwark, congratulating them on their growing numbers and work. To attempt to report in detail a discussion that ranged over all the wide area of the essay were fruitless, but some valuable suggestions were thrown out as to future essay competitions. The word limit was inveighed against, as having dwarfed the scope of the essay, but of course, a word limit is unavoidable, and crisp, unadjectived sentences may convey facts possibly better than ornamented and diffuse ones. Like a famous black and white artist, who is reputed to draw his figures, and then to remove every unnecessary line, an essayist should weigh his sentences till every word is absolutely necessary to the exact meaning intended. In answer to a challenge, that the limit was too much for the subject, Mr. Roberts undertook at a future date, to read to the members a model essay—an event which we all shall look forward to. The

financial details of the successful essay were sharply criticised, but the hon. sec. created some amusement by reading an extract of the varying financial statements of the successful and unsuccessful essayists, which showed extraordinary divergencies, and Mr. Roebuck, in reply to the discussion, pointed out that the adjudicators asked for a personal statement—"How I would organise," and not "How ought you to organise," which left room for idealisation. With votes of thanks to the reader of the paper and to the Chairman, terminated a very pleasant meeting.

N.W. BRANCH : JANUARY MEETING.

The usual monthly meeting was held at the Athenæum, Manchester, on Wednesday, January 17th, when a good number of assistants were present. Mr. J. H. Swann, Chairman of the N.W. Branch, L.A.A., presided, and the discussion on Quinn's Manual was continued. (*Chapters 7, 8, and 9.*)

The Chairman opened the discussion, drawing attention to one point which Mr. Quinn, so far as he had noticed, made no mention of, and that was the question of dealing with magazines which had changed their titles. A notable case in point was that of the "Westminster Review," which, in the course of its varied career, had altered its title several times—and then after many years had reverted to its original title. In dealing with such cases, he thought that the usual procedure was the best, namely, to make the principal entry at the last known title with cross references, showing the various changes. It was one of the many little difficulties which harassed the soul of the cataloguer.

After several members had spoken with reference to cases such as the foregoing which had come under their notice, attention was called to "Quinn," page 68, where objection was raised to the manner in which abbreviations were entered. In the case of "Jowett, Benjamin. The Epistles of St. Paul, &c., 3rd ed., ed. and condensed by Lewis Campbell, 2 v., 1891," a plainer form of entry was needed than "3rd ed., ed.;" 3rd ed., *edit.* would certainly be more easily understood by the public. On page 65 Quinn, under the entry of "Bible, The," writes:—"—*French* La Sainte Bible. Ed. Ostervald, 1890," which was another form which Mr. Quinn used to signify *edited by*, but which anyone might be excused for taking it—that the Bible was written in French by Edward Ostervald!

Reader's Guides were brought under notice, and in the case of a very able guide quoted, its usefulness to readers was impaired by the frequent contractions, which were mystifying to the readers, and could only be explained on the score of economy in printing. This point was frequently overlooked by librarians and others, who, to save a few pence, more frequently bothered than helped the people they desired to assist, forgetting that what might be plain to the cataloguer was not so to the user of it. Books of compound authorship were also a difficulty, if only from the increased entries necessary. One work mentioned was

by no fewer than twenty-three distinct authors. ("British Africa," Empire Series.) Many other works having been brought under review, and their treatment dealt with, the discussion was adjourned. P. O. G.

FEBRUARY MEETING.

The February meeting will be held, by the kind invitation of Mr. W. R. Credland, at his residence, 185, Great Cheetham Street, Higher Broughton, Manchester, on February 14th. Members are requested to meet at the Cromwell monument at 6.45 p.m. prompt. Tea at 7. Meeting at 8. Discussion on chapters 10, 11, and 12, of Quinn. Members are requested to catalogue the following books, or as many of them as they are able to do, and during the evening the proper methods will be explained:—

Queen Elizabeth's Englishings of Boethius, *De consolatione philosophiae*, A.D. 1593. Plutarch, *De Curiositate*; Horace, *De arte poetica* (Part), A.D. 1598. Edited from the unique MS., partly in the Queen's hand, in the Public Record Office, London, by Miss Caroline Pemberton. London, 1899, 8vo. Early English Text Society, vol. 113.

Catalogue of Greek coins in the Hunterian Collection, University of Glasgow. Volume 1. Italy, Sicily, Macedon, Thrace, and Thessaly, by George Macdonald. Glasgow, 1899.

Biblioteca de Autores Españoles desde la formacion del Lenguaje hasta nuestros dias. Historiadores de Sucesos Particulares. Por Don Cayetano Rosell, 2vols. 8vo. Vol. 1, 1858. Vol. 2, 1853.

Leibnitz: the Monadology and other philosophical writings, translated with introduction and notes, by Robert Latta. Oxford, at the Clarendon Press, 1898. (8vo.)

The Real French Revolutionist, by Henry Jephson. 1899.

How Count Tolstoy Lives and does His Work. By P. A. Sergiyenko. 1899.

LECTURES IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

The scope of Mr. F. Meaden Roberts' paper on this subject was practically limited to London, but the following interesting letter as to what is done at Northampton, affords an illustration of the development of lectures. Next month we hope to print further letters and articles on the subject.

Apropos of Mr. Meaden Roberts' suggestive paper on "Lectures in Libraries," a short account of the system prevailing at Northampton, where these lectures have proved most highly successful, may be of interest. Instituted some six or seven years ago, on a "popular" basis, they were immediately a great success, and have so continued down to the present time. The lectures take the form of "Saturday evening talks," the subjects treated of being most varied, ranging from geology, archaeology, and literature, down to such comparatively frivolous

subjects as dancing, amateur photography, &c. Dramatic and musical recitals are also included in the season's programme, and are, as may be guessed, as popular as the lectures proper. The "talks" are held in the large hall of the Municipal buildings, which has a seating capacity of 2,000, and this hall is invariably filled, very frequently to overflowing. A charge of one penny is made for admission, and this charge not only makes the "talks" self-supporting, but is the means of placing a balance, by no means insignificant, to the credit of the Library Committee at the end of each session. The "talks" are managed by a sub-committee, appointed, of course, by the Library Committee, who delegate to it all executive powers in so far as the "talks" are concerned. Whether, of course, this is a strictly legal proceeding is a moot point, for the question has never been raised, at all events, not at Northampton. The high standard of the "talks" may be judged from the fact that the names of the Bishop of London, the Bishop of Peterborough, the late Sir Henry Dryden, Professor Boyd-Dawkins, Professor Boyd-Carpenter, the Rev. Dr. Cox, Dr. C. V. Stanford, and others appear in the list of lecturers. The "talks" are illustrated, by the way, with a lantern using the electric light, and which cost £40, paid for entirely out of the admission fees. Circumstances alter cases, I know, but surely if these lectures can be made so successful at Northampton, without drawing upon the income of the library in any shape or form, can they not be made as successful elsewhere? C. R. WRIGHT.

THE ORIGIN OF THE ENGLISH NOVEL.—III.

By ARCHIBALD SPARKE.

It may be taken for granted that the first object of every writer of fiction is to instruct and to amuse, and the question arises which are the works that instruct most, as the provision of amusement is not a matter of primary importance. Some people prefer works that amuse, but the more thoughtful portion of the public prefers works that instruct, and here a very interesting field of enquiry is opened up.

Richardson and Smollett contributed to the formation of the novel, but the novels of the former are a concoction of insipidity, while in those of the latter the manliness and purity that characterise every line of Fielding are utterly wanting.

Sir Walter Scott was perhaps the first English novelist who really combined instruction with amusement, and no author has presented the most interesting periods of English history in a more pleasing manner. In spite of Scott's mannerisms, a knowledge of his novels is in itself a liberal education. In all his novels he is true to nature, and it might well be said of him that "he uttered nothing base." His historical novels are strictly accurate in regard to recorded facts, and are full of beauty and pathos. "Ivanhoe" teaches that the path of duty

and honour is the path of safety and renown, and all his novels display his principal aim as the desire to make popular things noble and good, and unpopular things mean and cowardly. The one blemish on Scott is the unnecessary amount of Scotch phrases; and though some people may think I display a want of judgment in placing "Westward Ho!" as the finest novel of the nineteenth century, it is impossible to read this book without feeling something of the grand spirit that animated our ancestors when they cheerfully met the Armada, and scattered the power of Spain. Such fiction as that of Scott and Kingsley can only tend to develop all that is good, pure, and noble; and it is pleasant to think that most of our novelists in their writings have tried to teach the same great lessons.

Two other great names that suggest themselves are those of Thackeray and Dickens. Living at the same period, it is curious to note what different aspects of life they present in their works, and we seem to have Fielding and Goldsmith reproduced. Thackeray depicts life as it is, Dickens as he would like it to be; and a perusal of "Vanity Fair" makes us think of the depravity of human nature, while "David Copperfield" or "Oliver Twist" brings before us all that is best and purest in life. In "George Eliot's" works we have fiction that consists of true and faithful pictures of life and manners. There is a pathos about "Adam Bede" and "Middlemarch" which is bound to influence the most callous; and these books must have placed before thousands of young people a warning which commanded respect.

The returns of every library in the country prove that the mind of the people is still as firmly bent as ever upon pure and noble fiction, but it cannot be concealed that a large proportion of fiction that is in circulation does not tend to create a love for honesty, truth, and virtue. There are books which pander to the lower instincts of man, and which foster those evil passions that tend to destroy every good and noble principle.

The youth of a country must be largely influenced by the literature which is read by them, and by the ideals that are put before them in it. The class of literature which is provided by unscrupulous authors and publishers, whose only object is a selfish pecuniary one, cannot but be full of harmful results.

It is not a pleasant task to consider those fictional works which are pernicious, and which lead to pernicious actions on the part of others, because they hold up to admiration misdeeds. Two of the most popular authors of the nineteenth century have been mainly responsible for such literature. Ainsworth delights one with his splendid descriptions of life and manners, and Lytton will always live as one of our most finished and accomplished writers, and though I am convinced neither of them would have wilfully produced books the results of which are deplorable, there can be no question that "Jack Sheppard,"

"Paul Clifford," and "Eugene Aram" have had an influence which every right-thinking man must regret. Criminals of the worst type are converted into popular heroes. "The Newgate Calendar" can show us few more base and miserable murderers than Eugene Aram, or few more deliberate law-breakers than Jack Sheppard, and yet these personages are made into heroes!

Everyone who is acquainted with the work of a public library is well aware of the craving for sensational literature, which the libraries cannot, or rather will not, supply. So it comes to pass that every day young persons coming into the Reading Rooms bring with them papers, the character of which is to deprave the mind and destroy every sentiment of rectitude and honesty. These publications, unrestricted as they are, work more harm to the growing generations than all our philanthropic institutions can possibly counteract.

The influence of school life nowadays is small, the influence of Sunday schools is only felt once a week, but the "penny dreadful" is always with us. In almost every street in the suburbs of every large town boys and girls can obtain for a penny twelve pages of what is called "cheap literature," but which in reality can lay no claim to be called literature at all. As to its cheapness the records of the police courts show, that in place of being cheap, it is more expensive than the works of our best authors.

The subject of these "penny dreadfuls" ought to be made a question for the legislature. I am not proposing to curtail the liberty of the press in any shape or form, but a line ought to be distinctly drawn between the great daily papers that furnish us with information and those productions that are scattered broadcast from obscure courts and alleys in Fleet Street. Parliament is too busy considering theories to be able to devote any attention to an evil that is demoralising the youth of this country.

And even amongst those writers who have of recent years enjoyed the greatest popularity, no impartial observer can say that the tendency has not been evil. Take Miss Braddon's "Aurora Floyd," or any of Miss Brughton's novels. Can anyone say with justice that their tendency is moral? It may be that the experience of many of these women writers leads them to take a gloomy view of life, and to imagine immorality and vice as sapping society; but is it well that juvenile readers should have this picture always before them?

Thackeray said "Everyone ought to cultivate the acquaintance of his betters," and no one can read Black, Blackmore, Dickens, Eliot, Kingsley, Meredith, Oliphant, Scott or Thackeray, without feeling that they are in the company of betters, and without feeling better and wiser.

But can anyone say that the average novel of the last twenty-five years can be said to have the same ennobling invigorating influence?

Library authorities ought to give this question serious attention. The exercise of discretion and judgment in the selection of the publications and books for a library is one of the most serious duties of the authority. I do not for a moment advocate the forcing upon the frequenters of a library unpopular works, but I am convinced that a full supply of pure and healthy literature would have an enormous influence in forming the character of the younger generations. The demand for the more objectionable form of fiction is great, but are we to pander to it, or to lead our readers on to a higher and better field? It is the bounden duty of every librarian to do all in his power to create and foster a love of healthy and pure literature, and whether the recreative reading take the form of prose or poetical fiction, it behoves us to see that only the best is provided.

OUR NEW COVER.

From the clever pencil of one of the members of the L.A.A.—Mr. G. H. McCall, librarian in charge of the Belsize branch of the Hampstead Public Libraries, and formerly of the West Ham Libraries—comes the design that graces this issue. Designed especially to meet many purposes, not the least of which is that of being the bookplate of the association, the studious library assistant poring over his stately tome forms a charming picture, and the L.A.A. members will join with the Committee, we are sure, in thanking the designer.

THE L.A. EDUCATION COMMITTEE.

It is with great pleasure that we learn that the third series of lectures organised by the Education Committee will commence on February 14th, at 3.30 p.m. They will be held at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, Regent Street, W., and there should be a good attendance.

Owing to illness Mr. Macfarlane has been compelled to cancel his engagement to lecture on French Literature, and the Wednesday classes will be rearranged. As previously announced, Mr. Quinn will lecture at 5 on cataloguing, using his *Manual* as a text book (which can be had on application to the Hon. Sec. for 4s. 6d.) The lecturer, at 3.30, will be Mr. Doubleday, who will take as his subject "English Language and Literature," using Brooke's "Primer" as a text book (which can be had on application to the lecturer for 6d.)

On Thursday Mr. Roberts will lecture as previously announced, and he will be followed by a class in French Literature, to be conducted by Miss Hentsch.

Fees will be as before, and all intending students should communicate at an early date with Mr. H. D. Roberts, 44a Southwark Bridge Road, S.E.

"THE LIBRARY" REDIVIVUS.

The new series of the *Library* makes its appearance as a quarterly instead of a monthly journal. Mr. J. Y. W. MacAlister, continues the editor, and the first number is a good one and well printed. Mr. A. W. Pollard's illustrated description of "Woodcuts in English Plays Before 1660" and the "Catalogue of Danton's Library," by Mr. H. Belloc, deserve special mention. The papers dealing with the practical aspects of librarianship are not so effective, the writers finding little to tell us that is new, with the exception of Mr. J. R. Boosé in the first instalment of a series of papers on the Colonial libraries. An article on the working of open access in public lending libraries, in which the writer threatens that all librarians who resist or fail to encourage this system "will have to . . . go!" seems to us a little overstated. There is merit in the idea of open shelves, but it is an old, not a new, feature in libraries, and no one can lay it down as a drastic law to be immediately readopted, or force it down the throats of librarians and library committees.

NOTES AND NEWS.

NOTTINGHAM.—On Friday, January 5th, Mr. and Mrs. Briscoe entertained the library staff to supper, as they have done for some successive new years. After the repast table games were indulged in, and a very pleasant evening was spent. A vote of thanks to the City Librarian and Mrs. Briscoe was heartily carried by the staff.

PRETORIA.—That the Transvaal has public libraries is a fact doubly interesting just now, because the British officers and soldiers at present prisoners in the Transvaal capital are stated to be allowed the use of the library in question.

The *Volksstem* reports that the last book borrowed by Mr. Winston Churchill from the Pretoria Public Library before his escape was "Mill on Liberty." We hope that he found an opportunity to return the volume before his hurried departure, otherwise the fines for detention are likely to mount up unless his expectation of returning to Pretoria in March is realised. Lord Wolseley, until recently, at any rate, considered the Boers to be the most ignorant people he had ever met, but in the possession of a free library in their capital they are more advanced than the inhabitants of several London parishes. That the Transvaal libraries are an up-to-date is proved by the fact that two of the Cotgreave indicators are in use at Pretoria.

NOTICES.

Annual subscriptions to the Journal are now due, and with subscriptions to the L.A.A., should be sent to Mr. W. G. Chambers, *Hon. Treasurer*, Public Library, Stoke Newington, N.

All other communications should be addressed to the Hon. Sec., L.A.A., *pro. tem.*, 17, Tyrawley Road, Fulham, S.W.





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